

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) In a computing system that is in communication with a plurality of applications that are configured to utilize contact information to initiate communication with a contact, a method for providing a contact management system for managing contacts and their corresponding contact information for use by the plurality of applications, the method comprising:

creating a plurality of contacts having contact information that can be utilized by the plurality of communication applications, such that the plurality of communication applications can utilize the contact information to initiate network communication with the plurality of contacts;

storing the contacts in a centralized contact store that is accessible to each of the plurality of communication applications;

providing a contact interface having a plurality of regions initially and simultaneously displayed when the contact interface is launched, the contact interface including a display window displaying, to a user and in a contacts region, contact information corresponding to one or more of the plurality of contacts, the same display window in which contact information is displayed further being configured to display, in a links region simultaneously and initially displayed with, and separate from, the contacts region, simultaneously display one or more user-selectable links configured to for launching at least one of the plurality of communication applications to initiate network communication with a contact, the one or more user-selectable links of the separate links region including a link for only each type of communication method directly available to the computing system in view of the communication applications installed and the amount of contact information available from the centralized contact store;

~~launching an application~~ the at least one of the plurality of communication applications in response to user selection of one of the user-selectable links in the display window that also displays the contact information;

providing the launched communication application access to the contact and corresponding contact information through the contact interface or one or more other interfaces; and

enabling the launched communication application to retrieve the contact information from the contact store and utilize the contact information to initiate network communication with the contact.

2. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the one or more other interfaces prevent the at least one of the communication applications from having direct access to the contacts and corresponding contact information in the contact store.

3. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the one or more other interfaces further provide a security mechanism for preventing the at least one of the communication applications from accessing contacts and corresponding contact information that a corresponding user of the computing system has not authorized.

4. (Original) A method as recited in claim 3, wherein the corresponding user is a logged on user of the computing system.

5. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein enabling the at least one of the communication applications to utilize the contact includes enabling the at least one of the communication applications to update the contact information of the contact within the contact store.

6. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 5, wherein the contact information is updated by syncing the contact information in the contact store with contact information provided by the at least one of the communication applications.

7. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein enabling the at least one of the communication applications to utilize the contact includes updating contact information stored by the at least one of the communication applications in an application store with the corresponding contact information from the contact store.

8. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein enabling the at least one of the communication applications to utilize the contact includes enabling the contact to be sent to another store of another computing system.

9. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein enabling the at least one of the communication applications to utilize the contact includes enabling the at least one of a plurality of heterogeneous communication applications to modify the contact.

10. (Original) A method as recited in claim 9, wherein modifying the contact includes modifying an attribute associated with the contact.

11. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein enabling the at least one of the communication applications to utilize the contact includes enabling the at least one of the communication applications to create an association between the contact and at least one other contact.

12. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein enabling the at least one of the communication applications to utilize the contact includes enabling the at least one of the communication applications to initiate a communication by using the contact information associated with the contact.

13. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 12, wherein the communication includes at least one of an e-mail, a telephony session, an RTC session, an instant message, a facsimile, a telephone message, or a pager notification.

14. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein creating the contact includes merging contact information corresponding to a single person and that is obtained from a plurality of sources into a single contact.

15. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the contact comprises a data structure having a plurality of fields that contain different contact information, and wherein the one or more communication applications are configured to utilize contact information from different fields of the contact data structure.

16. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one of the communication applications is hosted by the computing system.

17. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein creating the contact includes enabling the user to set constraints that control how the contact can at least one of be accessed and utilized by communication applications.

18. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the one or more interfaces includes an interface for enabling a user to select portions of the contact information that will be made accessible to the at least one of the communication applications.

19. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the one or more interfaces includes an interface for enabling a user to select the contact from a plurality of available contacts.

20. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for use in a computing system that is in communication with a plurality of communication applications that are configured to utilize contact information to initiate communication with a contact, the computer program product comprising one or more computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions for implementing a method for providing a contact management system for managing contacts and their corresponding contact information for use by the plurality of communication applications, the method comprising:

creating a plurality of contacts having contact information that can be utilized by the plurality of communication applications, such that the plurality of communication applications can utilize the contact information to initiate network communication with the plurality of contacts;

storing the contacts in a centralized contact store that is accessible to each of the plurality of communication applications;

providing a contact interface, the contact interface having a plurality of regions initially and simultaneously displayed when the contact interface is launched, the contact interface including a display window displaying, to a user and in a contacts region, contact information corresponding to one or more of the plurality of contacts, the same display window in which contact information is displayed further being configured to simultaneously display, in a links region simultaneously and initially displayed with, and separate from, the contacts region, one or more user-selectable links configured to for launching at least one of the plurality of communication applications to initiate network communication with a contact, the one or more user-selectable links of the separate links region including a link for only each type of communication method directly available to the computing system in view of the communication applications installed and the amount of contact information available from the centralized contact store;

~~launching an application~~ the at least one of the plurality of communication applications in response to user selection of one of the user-selectable links in the same display window that also displays the contact information;

providing the launched communication application access to the contact and corresponding contact information through the contact interface, which operates external to the launched communication applications;

providing the launched communication application access to ~~one~~ one or more other interfacesextensible controls provided with the contact interface, at least one of the extensible controls being loaded within the launched communication application to provide the launched communication application with access to contact information stored in the centralized contact store, wherein the one or more extensible controls further control and limit access of the plurality of communication applications to the contact information, such that the one or more extensible controls provide a security mechanism for preventing at least the launched communication application from accessing contacts and corresponding contact information that a user of the computing system has not authorized; and

enabling the launched communication application to retrieve the contact information from the contact store and utilize the contact information to initiate network communication with the contact.

21. (Currently Amended) A computer program product as recited in claim 20, wherein the one or more other interfaces operating within the launched communication application prevent the at least one of the communication applications from having direct access to the contacts and corresponding contact information in the contact store.

22. (Cancelled).

23. (Currently Amended) A computer program product as recited in claim 20, wherein enabling the at least one of the communication applications to utilize the contact includes enabling the at least one of the communication applications to update the contact information of the contact within the contact store.

24. (Currently Amended) A computer program product as recited in claim 20, wherein enabling the at least one of the communication applications to utilize the contact includes updating contact information stored by the at least one of the communication applications in an application store with the corresponding contact information from the contact store.

25. (Currently Amended) A computer program product as recited in claim 20, wherein enabling the at least one of the communication applications to utilize the contact includes enabling the contact to be sent to another store of another computing system.

26. (Currently Amended) A computer program product as recited in claim 20, wherein enabling the at least one of the communication applications to utilize the contact includes enabling the at least one of the communication applications to modify the contact.

27. (Currently Amended) A computer program product as recited in claim 20, wherein enabling the at least one of the communication applications to utilize the contact includes enabling the at least one of the communication applications to create an association between the contact and at least one other contact.

28. (Currently Amended) A computer program product as recited in claim 20, wherein enabling the at least one of the communication applications to utilize the contact includes enabling the at least one of the communication applications to initiate a communication by using the contact information associated with the contact.

29. (Original) A computer program product as recited in claim 20, wherein creating the contact includes merging contact information corresponding to a single person and that is obtained from a plurality of sources into a single contact.

30. (Currently Amended) A computer program product as recited in claim 20, wherein the contact comprises a data structure having a plurality of fields that contain different contact information, and wherein the one or more communication applications are configured to utilize contact information from different fields of the contact data structure.

31. (Currently Amended) A computer program product as recited in claim 20, wherein the at least one of the communication applications is hosted by the computing system.

32. (Currently Amended) A computer program product as recited in claim 20, wherein creating the contact includes enabling the user to set constraints that control how the contact can at least one of be accessed and utilized by communication applications.

33. (Currently Amended) A computer program product as recited in claim 20, wherein the one or more other interfaces includes an interface for enabling a user to select portions of the contact information that will be made accessible to the one or more communication applications.

34. (Currently Amended) In a computing system that includes a contact store storing at least one contact, the contact comprising contact information that can be utilized differently by heterogeneous communication applications that are in communication with the computing system, the heterogeneous communication applications having application contact directories that are maintained independently of the contact store and that defines the at least one contact, a method for providing a contact management system for managing contacts and their corresponding contact information for use by the heterogeneous communication applications, the method comprising:

creating one or more contacts having contact information that can be utilized differently by at least two heterogeneous communication applications, wherein a plurality of the heterogeneous communication applications can utilize the contact information to initiate network communication with the plurality of contacts;

storing the contacts in a centralized contact store that is accessible to each of the at least two heterogeneous communication applications;

modifying contact information for at least one of the contacts in the contact store;

upon modifying the contact information, automatically updating corresponding contact information in at least one communication application-specific contact directory of at least one of the heterogeneous communication applications to correspond with the modified contact information in the contact store, and such that the at least one communication application is able to access the updated contact information from a corresponding application-specific contact directory and without having to request the updated contact information from the contact store;

providing a contact interface for displaying contact information to a user, the contact interface having a plurality of regions which are initially and simultaneously displayed when the contact interface is launched, the contact interface including a display window configured to display, to a user and in a contacts region, contact information corresponding to one or more contacts, and the same display window being further configured to display, in a links region simultaneously and initially displayed with, and separate from, the contacts region, simultaneously with the contact information, one or more user-selectable links configured to for launching at least one of the plurality of heterogeneous communication applications in response to user selection of a corresponding user-selectable link displayed in the display window with the contact information, the one or more user-selectable links of the separate links region including a link for only each type of communication method directly available to the computing system in view of the communication applications installed and the amount of contact information available from the centralized contact store; and

enabling the plurality of heterogeneous communication applications which can utilize the contact information to initiate network communication with the plurality of contacts to retrieve the updated contact information from a corresponding communication application-specific contact directory without having to request the updated contact information from the contact store in response to user selection and to utilize the updated contact information to initiate network communication with a contact using an communication application launched from the contact interface.

35. (Original) A method as recited in claim 34, wherein modifying the contact information includes modifying content of the contact information.

36. (Original) A method as recited in claim 35, wherein modifying the contact information is performed by a local application hosted by the computing system.

37. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for use in a computing system that includes a contact store storing at least one contact, the contact comprising contact information that can be utilized differently by heterogeneous communication applications that are in communication with the computing system, the heterogeneous communication applications having application contact directories that are maintained independently of the contact store and that defines the at least one contact, the computer program product comprising one or more computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions for implementing a method for providing a contact management system for managing contacts and their corresponding contact information for use by the heterogeneous communication applications, the method comprising:

creating one or more contacts having contact information that can be utilized differently by at least two heterogeneous communication applications, wherein a plurality of the heterogeneous communication applications can utilize the contact information to initiate network communication with the plurality of contacts;

storing the contacts in a centralized contact store that is accessible to each of the at least two heterogeneous communication applications;

modifying contact information for at least one of the contacts in the contact store;

upon modifying the contact information, automatically updating corresponding contact information in at least one application-specific contact directory of at least one of the heterogeneous communication applications to correspond with the modified contact information in the contact store, and such that the at least one communication application is able to access the updated contact information from a corresponding communication application-specific contact directory and without having to request the updated contact information from the contact store;

providing a contact interface for displaying contact information to a user, the contact interface having a plurality of regions which are initially and simultaneously displayed when the contact interface is launched, the contact interface including a display window configured to display, to a user and in a contacts region, contact information corresponding to one or more contacts and the same display window being further configured to display, in a links region simultaneously and initially displayed with, and separate from, the contacts region, simultaneously with the contact information, one or more user-selectable links configured to launch at least one of the plurality of heterogeneous communication applications in response to user selection of a corresponding user-selectable link displayed in the display window with the contact information, the one or more user-selectable links of the separate links region including a link for only each type of communication method directly available to the computing system in view of the communication applications installed and the amount of contact information available from the centralized contact store; and

enabling the plurality of heterogeneous communication applications which can utilize the contact information to initiate network communication with the plurality of contacts to retrieve the updated contact information from a corresponding application-specific contact directory without having to request the updated contact information from the contact store in response to user selection and to utilize the updated contact information to initiate network communication with a contact using ~~an application a~~ communication application launched from the contact interface.

38. (Original) A computer program product as recited in claim 37, wherein modifying the contact information includes modifying content of the contact information.

39. (Original) A computer program product as recited in claim 37, wherein modifying the contact information is performed by a local application hosted by the computing system.

40. (Cancelled).

41. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising filtering the plurality of contacts in the contact store to display a subset of the contacts, wherein said plurality of contacts are filtered according to one or more criteria selected from a group consisting of: name, phone number, address, keyword, online status, application capabilities, communication device capabilities, communication frequency, last selected contact, geographic location, emotional status, communication device status, and contact persona.

42. (Currently Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the display window lists a plurality of actions which can be taken to establish network communication with the one or more contacts, the plurality of actions being filtered based on the available contact information such that ~~sufficient contact information exists to take each of the~~ the listed actions ~~without requiring additional contact information be entered by the user~~ include only actions for which sufficient contact information is already available to the contact interface.

43. (New) A contact management system for managing contacts and their corresponding contact information for use by the plurality of applications, the contact management system comprising:

a client computing system, the client computing system including:

a host layer, the host layer including each of:

a plurality of communication applications, each of the plurality of communication applications being configured to access contact information to communicate with one or more of a plurality of contacts; and

a shell user interface having a contact library for managing contact information for the plurality of contacts;

an extensible controls layer having a plurality of public controls loadable by the plurality of communication applications of the host layer, the public controls being loadable within the plurality of applications to access contact information for the plurality of contacts, through the contact library of the shell user interface;

a centralized contact store in communication with the contact library of the shell user interface, the centralized contact store storing contact information for the plurality of contacts and being accessible to each of the plurality of communication applications; and

a synchronization layer in communication with the centralized contact store; and

one or more remote stores, the one or more remote stores including application-specific stores of contact data, and the one or more remote stores being in communication with the synchronization layer of the client device so as to synchronize data stored on the application-specific stores with the centralized contact store.